

Meadow @ Nevill Hall

Nevill Hall Nature Spaces

Jan 2026



Overview

The meadow, Red Barn field, is situated at the south eastern point of the site, one field away from the River Usk, adjacent the flood plain at risk of flooding. It could potentially be a vibrant wildlife meadow increasing its biodiversity with careful management and restricted grazing. One area is already a boggy habitat.

History

The Red Barn field, which is riverside of the new car park, is owned by ABUHB. It was bought in the early '90s as a potential site to relocate Maindiff Court hospital. This never happened for various reasons.



Options for the field then becoming an overflow car park were regularly discussed and ten years later progressed as far as demolition of a staff residency house located at the present entry. The car park finally happened with the recent Velindre Radiotherapy Unit development.

The design includes a double border toward the field, within which is tree and shrub

planting. The inner border is of the style of the original estate metal fencing, but that does not connect to that existing metal fencing. The outer fence is wooden and does link with that fencing.

Unfortunately gaps in the outer wooden fencing allowed sheep to get through, then coming on into the grounds of the hospital through the discontinuity of the metal fencing.



Indeed at one point an adventurous sheep made it out to Union Road! Temporary fencing to block the escape route then failed so, to exclude sheep totally from the field the lower access to the riverside fields beyond was closed. This was not though immediately effective because some did make their way over another fence. That fence at the

riverside perimeter of the field was then fixed.

The field is now sheep free and consequently ungrazed. The grass is now long and invasive brambles are already exploiting a new habitat. Ungrazed or uncut that process will continue.



Future Plans

The field is an ideal site to become a wild flower meadow , with all the benefits to nature but to do so needs management. It is an important space and as recognised in the Biodiversity report commissioned by ABUHB in 2023 :

“A historic parkland habitat (approximately 1.5 hectares) exist(ing) to the south of the Site with veteran trees amongst sheep pasture. Parkland, including where it has been converted to other land uses is a priority habitat (wood pasture and parkland) listed on the Monmouthshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan”. This report also recommends enhancements, recognising the benefits of *“... walking and talking...”* as an additional opportunity for *“therapy”* throughout the Nevill Hall site. That would be certainly be increased by creating access with a walking path from the existing gate at the eastern end linking into the Sensory Garden area, and possibly the new car park (see plan). Maintained as a meadow, it would allow wild flowers to grow and new trees could be planted.

To incorporate this field into Nevill Hall gardens would be a fantastic addition. The views are truly magnificent. However the prime value would be as a largely as an open space.



Initial Work and Longer term Maintenance

1. **Maintaining the grass.** The most effective natural way to do this is to let the sheep back in seasonally for grazing (or cattle). This is the method used in Castle Meadows which is shared by animals and humans at times! Alternatively (or additionally) the grass could be seasonally cut.
2. **Fixing the fencing.** Returning animals mandates that the borders are absolutely closed. This would be achieved by upgrading the fencing around the new car park, but also around the whole field perimeter. The new inner metal fencing around the car park needs extension to close the gap, joining the old metal fences at each end. The outer wooden fence needs an additional bar placing between the present bottom and middle bars.
3. **Creating a path.** In the first instance this can be done by mowing a meandering way, initially following the present trodden path and then crossing over to the Sensory Garden. At one point a crossing for the drainage gully needs creating (see plan appended). Later a more substantial path could be considered.

4. **Improving the access gates.** It would be best to leave the existing gates that can allow vehicle access and add new pedestrian gates at three points; at either end, and ideally at a new point somewhere in the boundary the new car park.



5. **Sowing the wild flower meadow.** This can wait till all else is fixed and would be a simple, entertaining and educational exercise!
6. **Planting new trees.** Our recommendation would be that this should be limited to ensure the space largely remains as a meadow. However the western end of the field, bordering the Bannau Brycheniog boundary is a boggy area, regularly flooded, and ideal for planting our successor to the fallen giant Black Poplar. That rare specimen tree was downed in the storm of 2020 and fell into the pond behind the Hall. It has been partially removed and the remains are merging with Nature!

Research is being undertaken for this type of tree and recently wardens from Bannau Brycheniog visited to examine the tree remains in the pond. Sadly no living shoots were there for genetic analysis, but we do have an offer of new Black Poplars, in fact two, a male and female – it is a diecious species. Planted in that low-lying area ,their ultimate high stature would not interfere significantly with views.

This would be a historic addition to the site.